

Alaska's Subsistence Halibut Program

Background & Description

National Marine Fisheries Service, Alaska Region

Restricted Access Management Program (RAM)

Program Effective Date: May 15, 2003



First, please note:

The information in this presentation is a summary explanation of the Alaska Subsistence Halibut Program. Relevant federal regulations are published in the Federal Register at *50 C.F.R. Part 300*. Specific questions about the regulatory requirements of the program should be resolved by referring to those regulations.

Purposes of Program

1. To allow qualified persons to continue to practice their long-term customary and traditional harvest of halibut for food in a non-commercial manner, by
2. Authorizing a subsistence fishery for Pacific halibut off Alaska.

Background

- **Until adoption of the regulations, fishing for subsistence halibut in Alaska has not been formally recognized in law.**
- **Beginning in 1996, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council received requests to recognize and validate customary and traditional halibut fishing practices.**

Background (cont'd)

- **The Council formed a Subsistence Halibut Committee to develop recommendations.**
- **In 1997, the Council, the Secretary of Commerce, and the International Pacific Halibut Commission approved the requests of Area 4E fishermen to retain under 32” halibut caught in the commercial halibut CDQ fishery.**

Background (cont'd)

- In October 2000, the Council adopted the Alaska Subsistence Halibut Program.
- Regulations to implement the program were published on April 15, 2003, and are effective on May 15, 2003. Program requirements apply beginning on that date.
- The Council is considering revisions to the program which may, in the future, change the requirements in some areas.

Regulatory definition of “Subsistence”

“Subsistence” is:

*...the non-commercial, long-term
customary and traditional use of halibut.*

- This definition is used to determine which Alaska Native Tribes and which rural communities are eligible to participate in subsistence halibut fishing.

Regulatory definition of “Subsistence Halibut”

“Subsistence Halibut” is:

...Halibut caught by eligible individuals for direct personal or family consumption as food or customary trade.

Program Requirements

- Subsistence halibut fishing is open to members of eligible Alaska Native Tribes and non-tribal residents of eligible rural communities.
- To legally participate, an individual must apply for and receive a Subsistence Halibut Registration Certificate (“SHARC”). A tribe may apply for its members.

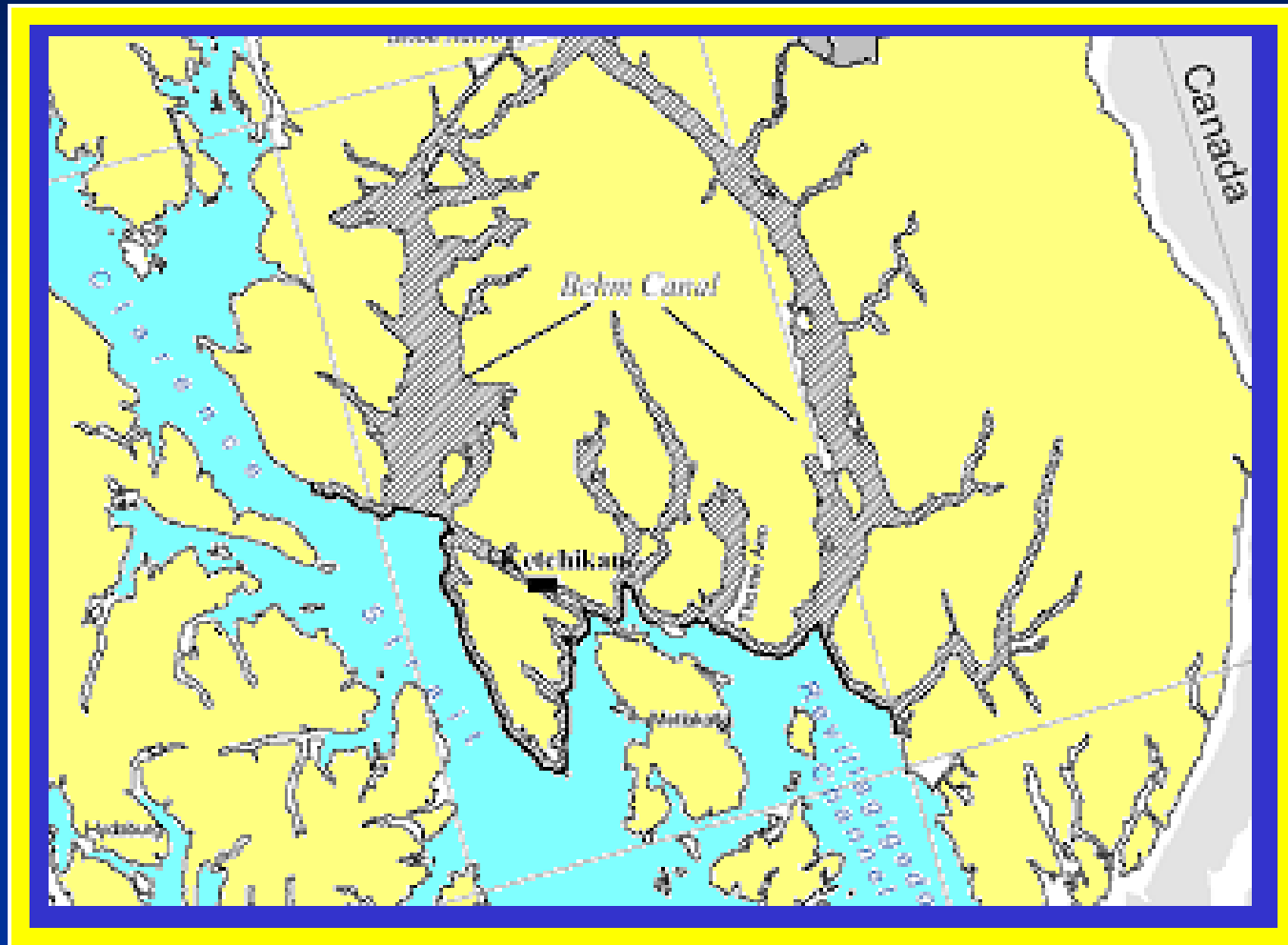
Eligibility for Subsistence Halibut Fishing

- **A person is eligible for Subsistence Halibut fishing if he or she is a:**
 - **resident of a rural community, or**
 - **a member of an Alaska Native Tribe,**
 - **but only if the person's community or Tribe has a demonstrated history of customary and traditional uses of halibut.**
- **Lists of eligible rural communities and Alaska Native Tribes are included in the program regulations.**

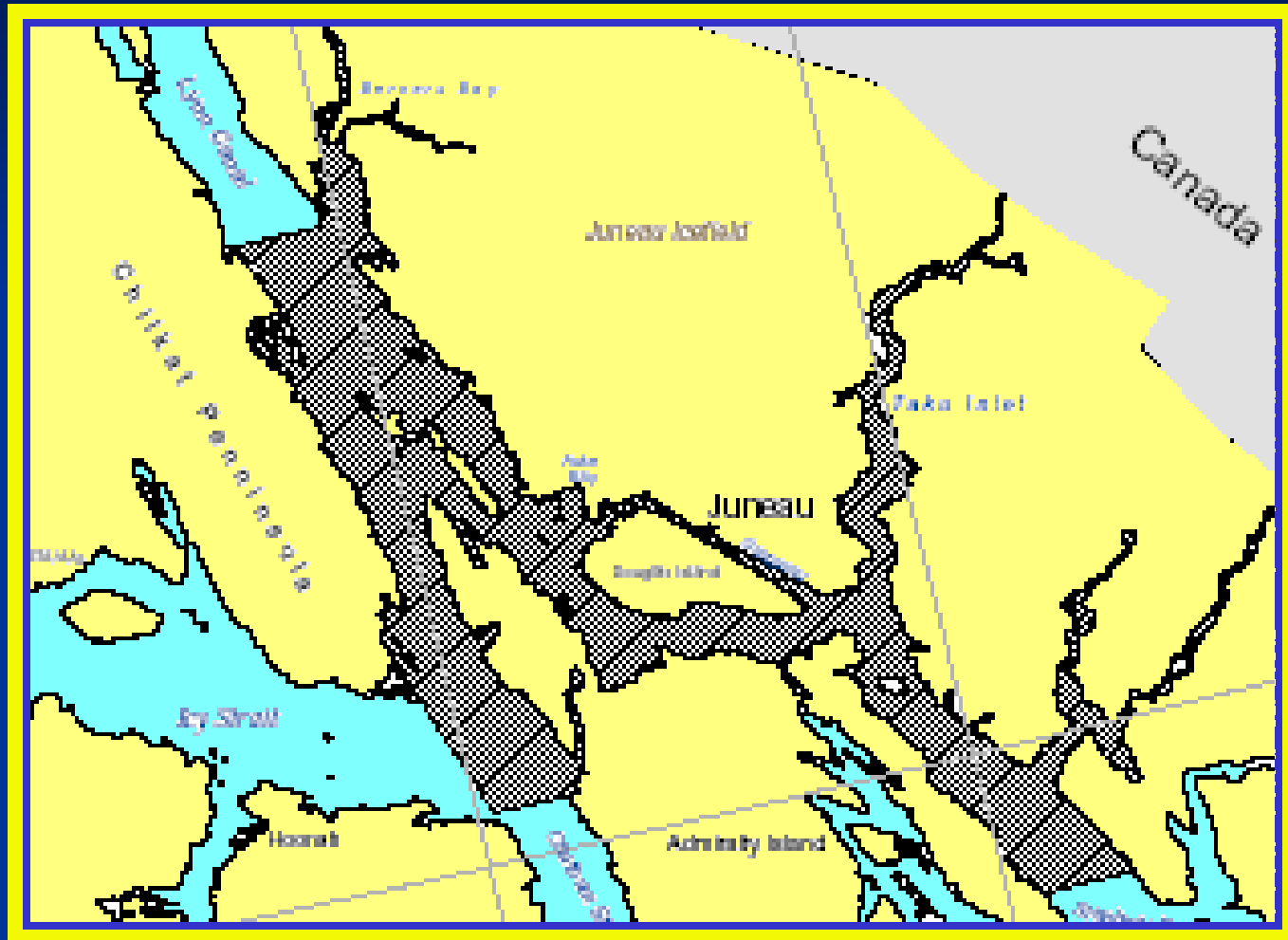
Areas Where Subsistence Fishing is Allowed

- All waters in and off Alaska, except for the following 4 “non-rural” areas:
 1. Ketchikan non-subsistence marine waters,
 2. Juneau non-subsistence marine waters,
 3. Anchorage/Mat-Su/Kenai non-subsistence marine waters, and
 4. Valdez non-subsistence marine waters.

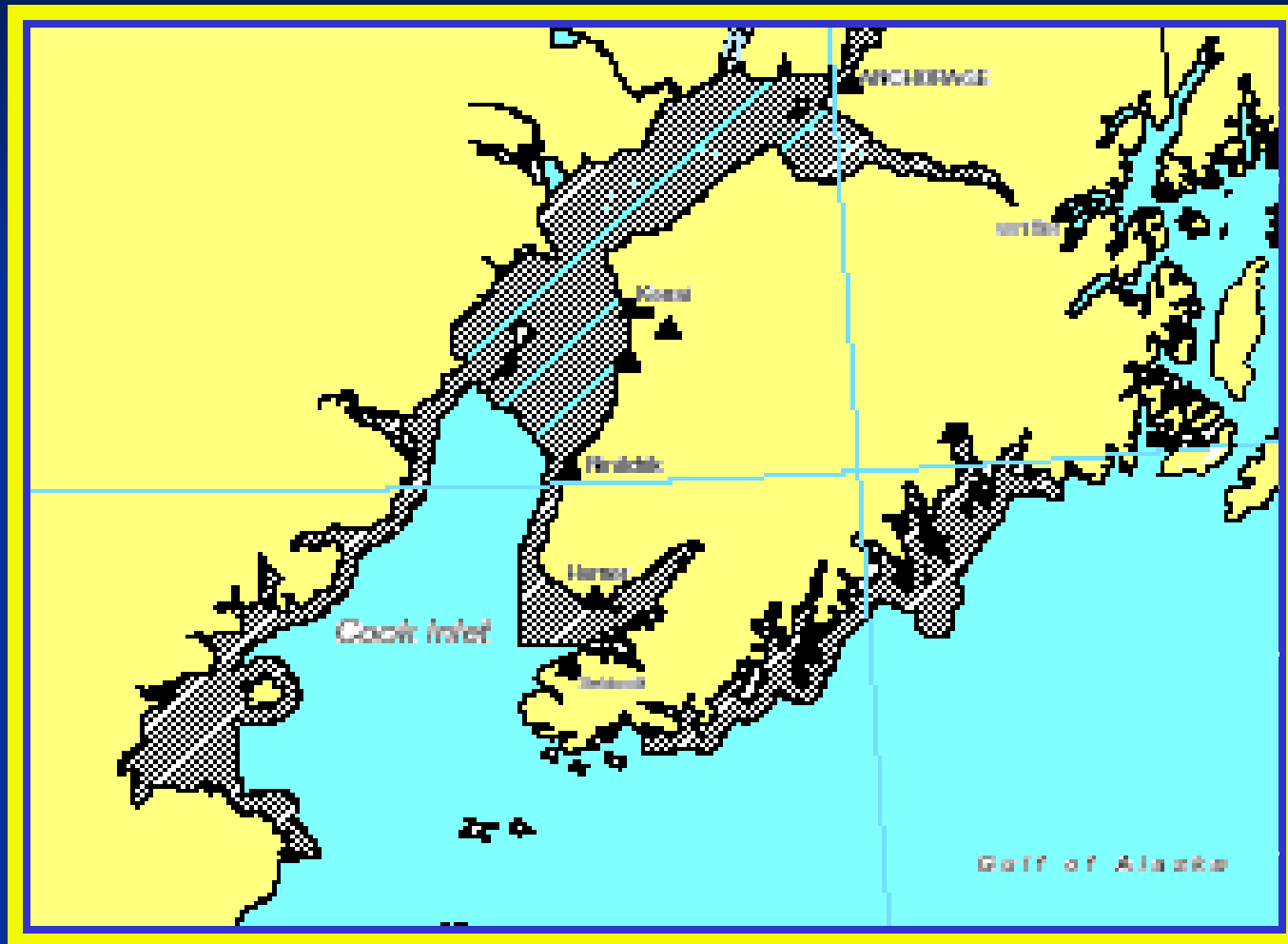
Ketchikan Non-Subsistence Marine Waters



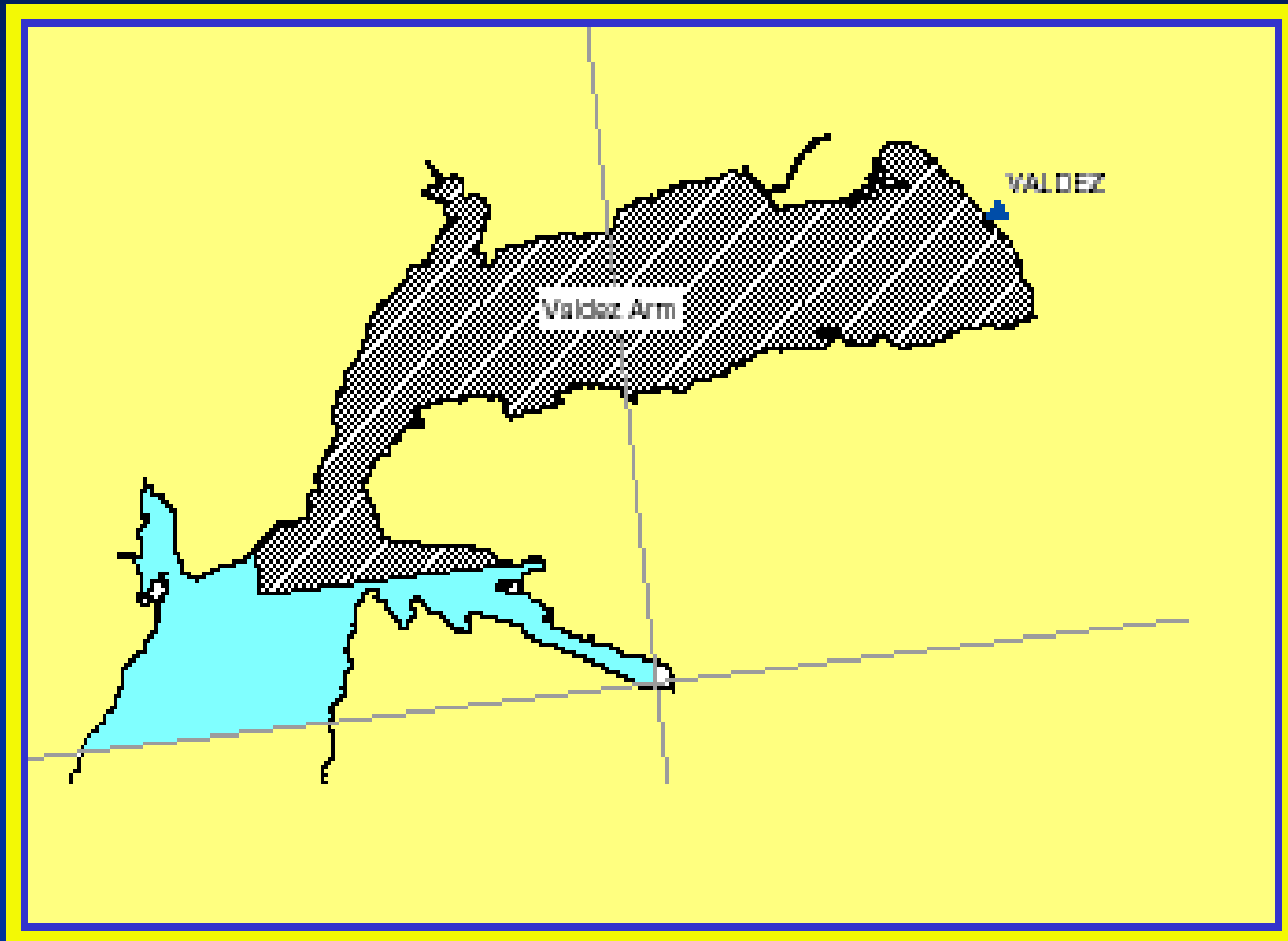
Juneau Non-Subsistence Marine Waters



Anchorage Non-Subsistence Marine Waters



Valdez Non-Subsistence Marine Waters



Areas Where Subsistence Fishing is Allowed (exception)

- **A person who resides out-of-state or in a non-rural Alaskan community, and who is a member of an eligible Alaska Native Tribe that is located in a rural area, may only subsistence halibut fish in the IPHC regulatory area in which the tribe is located.**

Authorized Subsistence Halibut Gear

- **Legal Gear includes:**
 - **Setline and hand-held gear, including:**
 - Longline
 - Handline
 - Rod and reel
 - Spear
 - Jig
 - Hand troll gear.
- **A SHARC holder may not use more than 30 hooks while subsistence halibut fishing.**

Authorized Subsistence Halibut Gear (cont'd)

- **Setline gear marker buoys must be identified by:**
 - **First initial, last name, and address of the SHARC holder, followed by the letter “S” to indicate subsistence halibut fishing.**
 - **Letters and numbers at least four inches high and one-half inch wide, and in colors that contrast with the color of the buoy.**

Seasons and Retention Limits

- Subsistence halibut fishing is open year-round.
- A SHARC holder may retain no more than 20 halibut per day, except that
 - in IPHC Areas 4C, 4D, and 4E there are no retention limits.

Customary Trade

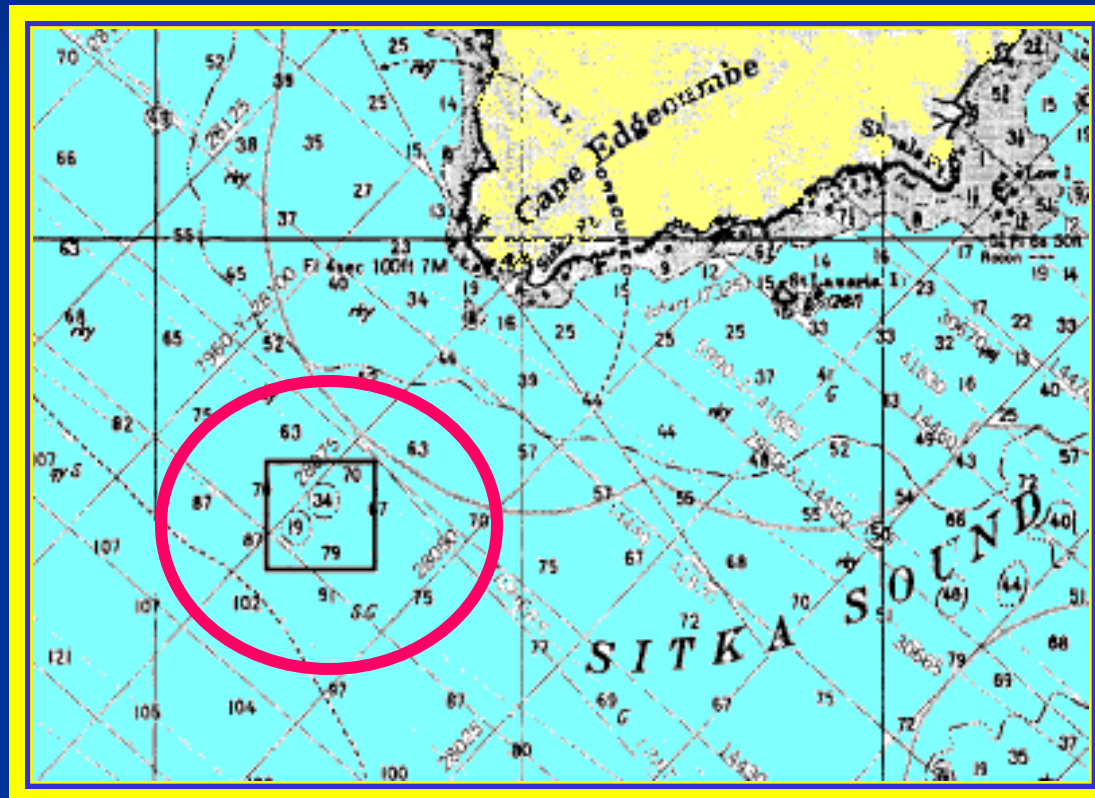
- Subsistence halibut may NOT be used for commercial purposes, and may NOT be sold or otherwise enter commerce.
- A qualified subsistence fisher may engage in customary trade through monetary exchange limited to \$400 per year.
- “Customary trade” is: ...*the non-commercial exchange of subsistence halibut for anything other than items of significant value.*

Monitoring Subsistence Harvests

- An important goal of the program is to obtain good information on the level of subsistence harvest.
- NMFS, or a representative, may conduct surveys of SHARC holders to estimate the annual harvest of subsistence catch and to obtain related catch and effort information.
- Participation in the survey is encouraged, but not required as a condition of holding a SHARC.

Other Provisions

- Subsistence halibut fishing in the Sitka Pinnacles Marine Preserve is prohibited.



Other Provisions (Cont'd)

- Subsistence halibut fishing from a charter vessel is prohibited.
- Processing subsistence halibut prior to landing in a way that prevents determination of the number of halibut caught, processed, or landed, is prohibited.

Other Provisions (cont.)

- Subsistence halibut and commercial or sport caught halibut may not be on board a harvesting vessel at the same time, except
 - in IPHC Areas 4D&E, where halibut under 32” may be retained with commercially caught halibut if the SHARC holder lands all the commercial halibut in Areas 4D or 4E.
 - A SHARC holder must make his or her certificate card available to an authorized officer upon request.



Subsistence Halibut Registration Procedures

- **Registration is allowed for two types of applicants, as follows:**
 - **Rural residents (non-Tribal members) must submit applications individually and provide the information required on the form.**
 - **Tribal members may submit individual applications or a Tribe may submit the Registration Application for its members.**

Subsistence Halibut Registration (cont'd)

- **Registration forms are available from NMFS, most Tribes, and other government and cooperating agencies.**
- **Registration forms are also available on the internet and may be completed on-line.**

Subsistence Halibut Registration Form

	Subsistence Halibut Registration Certificate Application	U.S. Dept of Commerce/NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service Restricted Access Management P.O. Box 21668 Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668	
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- **There are 3 Blocks on the form:**
 - A. Selection of type of registration (i.e., “rural” or “Tribal”);**
 - B. Rural Application; and,**
 - C. Tribal Application**

Subsistence Halibut Registration -- Block “A”

Block A - Type of Subsistence Halibut Registration	
Please indicate the type of registration under which you are applying (please mark only one):	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rural Resident Registration	<input type="checkbox"/> Alaska Native Tribal Registration
If you are applying as a resident of an Alaska rural community as defined in 50 CFR 300.61 (see instructions), please complete Block B . Those applying as a member of an Alaska Native Tribe as defined in 50 CFR 300.61 (see instructions), please complete Block C .	

In Block “A”, enter the type of registration for which you are applying; choose either: Rural Resident Registration or Alaska Native Tribal Registration.

Subsistence Halibut Registration -- Block “B”

Block B - Alaska Rural Resident Registration	
1. Name of Fisherman: (First, Middle, Last)	2. Community of Residence:
3. Mailing Address: (Number, Street, City, State, Zip Code)	4. Date of Birth:
	5. Daytime Telephone Number
6. I certify that I am a “Rural Resident” as defined at 50 CFR 300.61. Signature of Applicant _____ Date: _____	

Block “B” is for Rural Resident registration. Complete and sign. Name of “Community of Residence” is very important information (determines eligibility).

Subsistence Halibut Registration – Block “C”

Block C - Alaska Native Tribal Registration		
1. Name of Fisherman: (First, Middle, Last)	2. Name of Alaska Native Tribe	
3. Mailing Address: (Street, City, State, Zip Code)	4. Community of Residence	
	5. Daytime Telephone	6. Date of Birth:
7. I certify that I am a member of an “Alaska Native Tribe” as defined at 50 CFR 300.61.		
Signature of Applicant		Date:

Block “C” is for Alaska Native Tribal registration. Complete and sign. Name of “Alaska Native Tribe” is very important information (determines eligibility).

Subsistence Halibut Registration (cont'd)

- **Completed registration applications must be submitted to RAM in Juneau:**

**NMFS/RAM :: P.O. Box 21668
Room 713 Federal Building
709 West Ninth Street
Juneau, AK 99802**

- **Registration forms may also be completed and submitted on-line.**

Subsistence Halibut Registration (cont'd)

- **When applications are delivered (by any method), RAM will process them.**
- **When processing is complete, RAM will prepare a SHARC registration card and mail it to the applicant using the address provided on the application.**
- **When the card is received, the SHARC card holder may then participate in subsistence halibut fishing.**

Subsistence Halibut Registration (cont'd)

- **SHARC registration expires after**
 - **2 years for rural residents, and**
 - **4 years for members of Alaska Native Tribes.**
 - **The expiration date is printed on the card.**
- **Registration is renewable, and RAM will notify SHARC holders in advance of card expiration.**

For More Information

- For Program information, contact:

NMFS/RAM in Juneau

Tel: 800-304-4846 (option #2)

E-Mail: RAM.alaska@noaa.gov

Internet: www.fakr.noaa.gov/ram

- For Enforcement information, please contact your nearest Enforcement office, or call (907) 586-7225 (Juneau).